



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH  
550 S. VERMONT AVE., LOS ANGELES, CA 90020 HTTP://DMH.LACOUNTY.GOV



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Medical Director

January 26, 2016

TO: Each Supervisor  
FROM: *Robin Kay, Ph.D.*  
Robin Kay, Ph.D.  
Acting Director  
SUBJECT: **REPORT BACK ON PROTOCOLS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES  
FOR CRITICAL INCIDENTS AT CONSTRUCTION SITES  
(ITEM NO. 6, AGENDA OF JANUARY 5, 2016)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

On January 5, 2016, your Board approved a Motion by Supervisor Don Knabe regarding protocols for mental health services for critical incidents at construction sites. The Motion directed the Chief Executive Officer to work with the Acting Directors of Mental Health (DMH) and the Internal Services Department (ISD), Director of Public Works and the Executive Director of the Community Development Commission (CDC) on clear protocols to ensure mental health services are readily available in the event serious accidents occur on construction sites. This memorandum will provide you with a general description of services offered by DMH in response to community crises and actions taken in response to the Motion.

## **BACKGROUND: SERVICES PROVIDED BY DMH**

DMH regularly responds to traumatic events in the community, a County department, or agencies that are grappling with a tragedy. Specially trained mental health staff respond to requests for assistance and offer crisis intervention, education regarding stress responses that survivors may be experiencing, and stress management techniques. In the event that stress reactions increase in frequency or intensity, referrals are made for treatment. DMH staff provides services in participants' language whenever possible. On-site services may be provided to one person in need or to a room filled with 100 concerned citizens. DMH staff remains after large community meetings to interact with people who are upset, have questions or need further assistance.

DMH has provided crisis teams in response to many different tragic events including but not limited to construction accidents, unexpected death of a client or employee of a County Department, drive-by shootings and suicides viewed by citizens. Responding teams may offer services within a few hours of the incident or several days after the event, depending upon when DMH is contacted and the preference of those affected. DMH crisis counselors will also outreach to any construction crew members or employees too traumatized to return to work, either telephonically or in person. The Deputy Director for the Department's Emergency Outreach Bureau, Dr. Irma Castaneda, is responsible for overseeing the DMH

crisis response services. Requesting parties, including DPW, ISD, or the CDC, may contact Dr. Castaneda at (213) 738-4924 during normal business hours. After hours, on holidays, and weekends the Department's 24 hour ACCESS Center assists with mobilizing crisis teams; the ACCESS Center can be contacted by calling (800) 854-7771.

## **ACTIONS**

In response to your Board's Motion, the following actions are occurring:

- On January 19, 2016, the Directors of Public Works and the CDC and the Acting Directors of DMH and ISD met to review the protocol for initiating mental health crisis intervention in response to construction accidents.
- DMH has forwarded the attached written protocol to each involved Department.
- The Department of Public Works, CDC, and ISD will issue a notification to their contract monitors/liaisons and to all contract providers regarding the availability of mental health crisis services in the event of a future critical incident at a construction site.

If you have questions or your staff would like further information regarding this report, please feel free to contact Robin Kay, Acting Director, at (213) 738-4108 or [rkay@dmh.lacounty.gov](mailto:rkay@dmh.lacounty.gov).

RK:tld

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
Chief Executive Office  
Community Development Commission  
Internal Services Department  
Public Works  
Irma Castaneda



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## **PROTOCOLS FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AFTER A CRITICAL INCIDENT**

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) responds to traumatic events whether in the community, a County department, or any other agency that requires assistance. Specially trained DMH staff provides the following services:

- crisis intervention;
- education regarding normal stress responses;
- stress management techniques and
- linkage to treatment if attendees' stress reactions increase in frequency or intensity. For businesses that have worker's compensation benefits and/or the ability to pay, DMH provide information regarding at least 3 private providers from whom these businesses can secure services.

Services are provided in the language of the participants whenever possible. DMH provides crisis intervention to as few as one person or to a room filled with 100 concerned citizens. If DMH staff meets with large groups, they will remain after the meeting to interact with those who remain upset or have questions and need further assistance.

The following are a list of the types of agencies the Department of Mental Health responds to and the protocols for each:

### **Construction Sites**

DMH responds to Public Works, ISD, or city site where a critical incident has taken place. The response may be within a few hours of the incident or as long as a few days after the incident, depending on when the request is made. If someone on the crew is too traumatized to return to work, an effort is made to outreach to that person, first telephonically and then in person.

### **County Departments**

DMH responds to all County departments after a critical incident such as a death by suicide, murder, death of a co-worker or client as well as other events where the person survives but they and/or their co-workers are traumatized. DMH also responds to County departments after a disaster such as a major earthquake or flooding.

### **Community at Large**

DMH responds to critical incidents in the community such as drive-by-shootings, suicides in view of citizens, fatal accidents, robberies at gun point, etc. Calls are often made by police, fire departments, or the LA City Mayor's Crisis Response Team. DMH also provides a myriad of services to the community after a local or major disaster.

### **How to Access Help**

Requests for any of these services can be made by calling the office of the Emergency Outreach Bureau's Deputy Director, Irma Castaneda, at (213) 738-4924 during normal business hours or the ACCESS Center at (800) 854-7771 evenings, holidays and weekends.